INTERVIEW AGENDA

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TO: Examiner Jeremy S. Baskin/USPTO

FROM: Marcus P. Dolce/Price Heneveld et al.

DATE: October 29, 2009

RE: Application. No. 10/574,867 (Atty. Docket No. APP010 P307)

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me on October 27, 2009 and to agreeing to a telephone interview at 1 pm on Tuesday, November 3. During the telephone interview, I would like to discuss the following items:

1. I would like to remove the phrase "vacuum tight" from the claims to have the rejection of the claims as not complying with the written description requirement withdrawn (i.e., place the claims in the same condition they were before the last amendment).

2. I would like to add the subject matter of dependent claim 21 to claims 14 and 31. Claim 21 states that the at least one movable sealing body and the sealing surface each have an arcuate contour and a radius of the sealing surface is larger or equal to the radius of the at least one movable sealing body. According to the Office Action, it would have been obvious to substitute the roller 1 and surface (without any opening) of U.S. Patent No. 4,808,444 to Yamazaki et al. for the seal structure 30 and surface 16 of U.S. Patent No. 3,351,348 to Dupuis. First, Applicant submits that the substitution as set forth in the Office Action would not allow for the webs 38 and 39 to pass through the surface, which is required for coating the webs 38 and 39. Second, Applicant submits that the Dupuis '348 patent requires that nothing interacts with the webs 38 and 39 before they pass into the metallization chamber 5 (thus the need for an inert gas). Therefore, the Dupuis '348 patent requires that no material be deposited onto the webs 38 and 39 before they enter the chamber 5 and does not allow for any material to be deposited onto the webs 38 and 39 as the sealing box 17 is closed. Third, the Dupuis '348 patent requires a seal between the chamber 5 and the sealing box 17. Hence, the Dupuis '348 patent requires the seal structure 30. Contrarily, the Yamazaki et al. '444 patent discloses that the roller 1 and the surface on member 4 are spaced from each other. Therefore, using the roller 1 and the surface of the Yamazaki et al. '444 patent would not provide any seal between the sealing box 17 and the chamber 5.

I have attached to this email a copy of independent claims 14 and 31 with the proposed amendments as noted above. I look forward to speaking with you. If you have any questions in the meantime, please let me know.

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14. (currently amended) An air-lock valve comprising:

a housing having an opening configured to be traversed by a flexible band substrate; and

at least one moveable sealing body cooperating with a sealing surface of the housing for closing the opening during a closing phase of the air-lock valve, with the band substrate being clamped between the at least one movable sealing body and the sealing surface;

wherein the sealing surface surrounds the opening in a frame-like fashion, and the opening is closed ~~vacuum tight~~ by pressing the at least one movable sealing body upon the sealing surface and/or upon the band substrate traversing the opening such that the at least one movable sealing body closes the opening at least through indirect abutting at edges of the sealing surface; and

wherein the at least one movable sealing body and the sealing surface each have an arcuate contour and a radius of the sealing surface is larger or equal to the radius of the at least one movable sealing body.

31. (currently amended) A processing plant for traversing band-like substrates comprising:

at least one evacuable processing chamber;

at least another chamber associated with the at least one evacuable processing chamber for unrolling or winding up the band substrate;

the chambers are interconnected through an opening through which the band substrate is guided; and

at least one air-lock valve provided at the opening;

the at least one air-lock valve comprising:

a housing having the opening; and

at least one moveable sealing body cooperating with a sealing surface of the housing for closing the opening ~~vacuum tight~~ during a closing phase of the air-lock valve, with the band substrate being clamped between the at least one movable sealing body and the sealing surface;

wherein the sealing surface surrounds the opening in a frame-like fashion, and the opening is closed by pressing the at least one movable sealing body upon the sealing surface and/or upon the band substrate traversing the opening such that the at least one movable sealing body closes the opening at least through indirect abutting at edges of the sealing surface; and

wherein the at least one movable sealing body and the sealing surface each have an arcuate contour and a radius of the sealing surface is larger or equal to the radius of the at least one movable sealing body.